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Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 RIYADH 00619 261754Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------068904 261800Z /50
O 261630Z JUL 78
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 615
INFO SECDEF/ISA/DSAA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SANA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
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S E C R E T RIYADH 0619

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, MARR, YE, SU, SA
SUBJECT: MILITARY SUPPORT FOR YAR

REF RIYADH 618

1. REFTEL REPORTS RESULTS OF JULY 25 - 26 U.S. IN-HOUSE MEETING
IN RIYADH OF REPRESENTATIVES OF USMTM, EMBASSY SANA, AND EMBASSY

JIDDA AND CONTAINS OUTLINE OF COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM OF MILITARY
SUPPORT FOR YAR, INCLUDING MEAR-TERM, MID-TERM, AND LONG-TERM PLANS.

2. EMBASSY FEELS THAT PROGRAM AS OUTLINED IS GOOD PROGRAM AND WE
RECOMMEND THAT ITBE ENDORSED FOR USE BY U.S. SIDE ON JULY 29.
OVERALL PLAN IS DESIGNED TO ACCOMPLISH THREE GOALS PREVIOUSLY RECOMM-
ENDED BY EMBASSY: (XXA) COUNTER SOVIET INFLUENCE IN YAR, (B)
SUPPLANT SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN YAR, AND, (C) PROMOTE STABILITY
IN YAR AND IN REGION IMMEDIATE OR NEAR-TERM PLAN IS MEANT TO BE
COMPLETED IN TIME FOR MILITARY PARADE ON
YAR NATIONAL DAY SEPTEMBER 26 AND IS DESIGNED TO BE HIGH-IMPACT,
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SIGNIFYING TO USSR OUR INEREST IN YAR AND TO SAG THE SERIOUSNESS
OF U.S. INTENTION TO ASSIST THEM IN COUNTERING THE EXTENSION OF SOVIET

INFLUENCE INTO THE ARABIAN PENINSULA. MID-TERM (1978-1980) AND LONG-
TERM (1981-1985) PLANS ARE DESIGNED TO BUILD YAR MILITARY STRENGTH
IN ORDER TO PROMOTE INTERNAL STABILITY AND TO DETER PDRY FROM
HOSTILE ACTIVITIES AGAINST YAR. IN VIEW OF SAG DISAPPOINTMENT WITH

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WHAT THEY HAVE PERCEIVED IN PAST AS FAILURE OF U.S. TO RESPOND ADEQUATELY TO SOVIET PRESENCE IN HORN OF AFRICA AND IN THE BAB AL-MANDIB, WE BELIEVE THAT PROGRAM WILL BE VERY WELCOME TO SAG AND WILL PROVIDE FURTHER CEMENT TO SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

3. IN ORDER FOR THIS PROGRAM TO WORK, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT TRI-LATERAL RELATIONSHIP AMONG SAUDI ARABIA, YAR, AND U.S. HAS TO BE PLACED ON BASIS OF EQUALITY, I.E. ALL THREE MUST BE ABLE TO DEAL AND COORDINATE WITH EACH OTHER ON EQUAL BASIS AND WE HAVE RECOMM-ENDED IN PREVIOUS TELEGRAMS THAT THIS BE MADE CLEAR TO SAG. HOWEVER, OUR ARGUMENT WOULD BE MORE CONVINCING TO SAG IF USG WERE CONTRIB-UTING SOMETHING MORE TO THE ARRANGEMENT THAN EXPERTISE AND EQUIPMENT. WE BELIEVE SAG IS WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE LION'S SHARE OF PROGRAM COST BUT WE THINK THAT IT WILL BALK AT BEARING WHOLE COST, ESPECIALLY IF GREAT DEAL OF NEW FUNDING IS REQUIRED. WE RECOMMEND CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO U.S. SHOULDERING AT LEAST A PORTION OF PROGRAM, EVEN IF IT IS ONLY TOKEN. DEPARTMENT COULD EXPLORE THIS WITH DOD WITH VIEW TO IDENTIFYING THOSE PORTIONS THAT WOULD NOT BE TOO COSTLY BUT WOULD BE HIGHLY VISIBLE.
ON THE HIGH SIDE, WE COULD TAKE OVER THE NAVY PORTION OF THE PROGRAM. HERE, THE U.S. HAS THE EXPERTISE AND THE CAPABILITY.
SAUDI NAVY IS STILL BEING BORN. SAUDIS HAVE VERY LITTLE CAPABILITY IN NAVAL MATTERS, AND DIRECT U.S. PARTICIPATION IN NAVY PROGRAM MAY BE REQUIRED IN ANY EVENT. IT SHOULD ALSO BE BORNE IN MIND THAT DEVELOPMENT OF HUDAYDAH PORT IS NOW IN HANDS OF RUSSIANS AND WE

MAY ALSO WANT TO DEVELOP ECONOMIC AID PROGRAM FOR TAKING OVER THE PORT'S DEVELOPMENT.
GRANINGER

NNN

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